

KISS OF MARENA



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FOREWORD

Two years after it was first published in Russian, this tiny, but very valuable piece of sinister fiction, is now, for the first time available in English in its full. This was accomplished through colaboration between, and through effort of respected publisher, Martinet Press, and a member of ABG Lodge.

This fascinating story originated from, undeservedly, little known group operating from Russia – The Temple of the Black Sun (TBS). This group existed long time before they, relatevily recently, 'came out of the dark' into public, via medium of internet, providing those interested, with a chance of getting at least some impression about what this gathering represents. At the first glance it is easy to notice how this group was greatly influenced by, what is now known as Sinisterly-Numinous (O9A) Tradition. However, they managed to find their own and unique expression of this Tradition, expression that is in tune with their inheritance and real-life circumstances within which they operate and evolve. All of this was very beautifly articulated within the pages of this story. Although, there are no direct references to O9A, every written line is imbued with the very essence of this Tradition. Every important Outer and Inner aspect of the Path is represented through this work – thus, making it truly what any such piece of fiction aspires to be – a genuine magickal tool. Categorized and appearing as a 'fiction', it is evident that “Kiss of Marena” is firmly rooted in reality surrounding this group, and in real experiences and insights of someone who walked this Way. Among these pages, reader will encounter that ancient pagan spirit and wordless wisdom of Cosmos, but placed within the context of/in relation to contemporary civilization, and within the

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context of/ in relation to the Quest of contemporary individual seeker of such wisdom, providing hints at future progression a form created in such a way – which all can be summed up by one (o9a) term – *Wyrdful*.

For those not familiar with Slavic paganism, Marena (Mara) is a goddess of Ancient Slavic pantheon. Among different Slavic nations she was called and known by different variations of this name. Among Polish tribes she was known as Marzanna, Among our corpus of South-Eastern Slavs she was known as Morana. From this root came Serbian words like ‘mora’ which means ‘nightmare’ ‘pestilence’, or ‘moriti’ which means ‘*to rack*’ ‘*to torture*’ ‘*to give a pain and misfortune*’. She is associated with Winter and some variations of her name, like Marzena, possibly shares root with word ‘mraz’ which means ‘frost’. She was a goddess of Death and was important part of seasonal rites of death and rebirth in Nature, practiced by ancient Slavs. She was also a goddess of sorcery, but ultimately elusive and ‘shape-shifting’ like many ancient Slavic gods.

**Zorya Aeterna,
ABG Lodge**

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I

Raven opened his eyes. The blood was pounding in his temples, giving a thud in the brain, the body covered with cold sweat, he was short of breath, and fear of cold fettered his soul again

The same dream...

He took a deep breath, trying to calm down and to manage a hectic current of thoughts. Consciousness slowly cleared up, he looked at the clock - four in the morning. The city was still sleeping, outside rain was drizzling softly, and with opening of window he breathed the refreshing coolness of the night.

Raven was lying, staring at the ceiling, trying not to think about anything, but this horrible nightmare again and again was popping up in front of his eyes. Viscous darkness, unbearable cosmic cold, and that terrifying creature in a black shroud, from which he could not escape. This nightmare haunted him since childhood, always the same ... All seemed dissolving in the darkness, and the cold wind brought the news of the uninvited guest, a viscous darkness flooded all around, and from that darkness She came out... He tried to scream, but he couldn't heard himself, his voice just disappeared, he tried to run, but his legs were turning into cotton, and every step was incredible difficulty to him, as moving through the mire, the horror paralyzed his body and did not allow him to breathe, or to think, and she just was following him - not trying to catch up with him, but also not allowing the escape. When strength left him, and he was ready to give up - a dream dissipated, and he woke up. Recently, this

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creature was his obsessive nightmare, Raven was seeing her more often, and that bothered him greatly.

No one would dare to call Raven a coward, in his twenty he has already won the respect of the NS¹ crowd, and was in their ranks for several years. He was known as a ruthless and uncompromising fighter, never missing an opportunity to test himself in combat. To him it was not important the skill or the number of opponents, only thing important was moment in the battle - a moment that tore from him all the social stamps and masks, turning him into a raging beast, that knew no mercy, he reveled in that, in the moment of fight he always felt so Alive. It seemed that there was nothing in the world that can scare Raven, nothing ... Besides this nightmare. What is he afraid of? Death ... No, he was scared of the unknown.

Raven chased away disturbing thoughts and tried to sleep, a busy day awaits him. Tomorrow is the summer solstice, and he was turning twenty-one. Raven, being like all his fellow pagans, always felt a mystical connection with his ancestors; servile Judeo-Christian faith was repugnant to his nature. He hated banal holidays with drunken revelry, and the birthdays and holyday parties he never attended, Raven had his seasonal holidays, and April 20th. So on his birthday, he decided to kindle a fire in honor of the solstice and the glory of Ancestors.

In the evening Raven noticed a magazine article devoted to some anomalous areas located in the south of the Kaluga region, close to the Kozelsk. A place called "Devil's ancient

¹ National-Socialist

settlement"² there were a lots of rumors about it, but the one most interesting was that according to legend the Settlement was Vyatichi heathen temple, who used it for their religious ceremonies. After another hour tossed, Raven after all fell asleep. After a quick breakfast, he grabbed the backpack, prepared the night before, and went out into the street. The weather was wonderful; the rain that was falling last night made only small fast-drying pools, and the trip was going to be pleasant.

To the Sosenskiy village, which lay on the path to the settlement, he got on the bus by the evening, it still wasn't dark and Raven had enough time. In recent days, he read a lot of information on how to get to the place and made a detailed map of the route. According to reviews, Castle was almost impossible to find without a guide, but he surprisingly quickly managed to find his way, not even looking at the map, as if he had been there more than once. Some inner instinct told him what the right direction was.

After going about three kilometers on asphalt road, Raven turned into the woods. In the cool of the evening forest prevailed, centuries-old pine trees, in the light of the setting sun casted long weird shadows, the air was filled with the smell of tar and wild herbs. Raven was struck by the tranquility and joy that reigned in his soul, as if he came home, he did not care about those dark legends and rumors that were surrounding this place. He wanted to lose his human form, turn into a beast and be part of the forest forever.

² Original «Чёртово городище» - "Chert's settlement". Chert, or Chort was Ancient Slavic god (demon) of misfortune

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-Stop! - Raven heard a voice sounding so clear in his mind that he looked around in wonder. Stopping, he realized that he had lost track of time and had no idea how far through the forest, reproaching himself for negligence, Raven took a map trying to find landmarks. Suddenly, as if emerging from a different dimension, a huge black bird flew over, he was stunned, the first time in his life he saw a crow so close in the wild. With this mystical bird he had a special bond, Raven consider it as his totem - animal strength, so his first tattoo, he had on his left shoulder, was a crow.

Bird perched on the fork branch of an old tree in the forest and invitingly croaked, no doubt about it, it called him to follow. As in a dream, he went to the call of the winged messenger, and, after two hundred meters, he realized that right in front of him stood a wooden sign "Ferris mound." The bird was gone, but this strange meeting was only the beginning of the mystical night that forever changed the life of Raven ...

Half an hour later it became clear to Raven that he got to the place. After crossing a wooden bridge over a small river, he saw a clear path up the hill, which led him to huge moss-covered boulders. They stood like ancient guards protecting the entrance to the Otherworld. Next, passing the odd-shaped mound of stones, he went to a small rock on top of which was laying a flat stone, resembling an altar to him, at the foot of the cliff, he found a small cave with amazing glowing moss and a flat area, where he decided to set up camp.

Close to midnight, Raven gathered branches for the fire while repeating the phrase connected with his goal, in his head, he was going to light the fire, in order to hold an

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improvised ceremony. but something stopped him, listening to his senses, he noticed that there was a dead silence around, no birds were singing, the trees made no noise, even obsessive mosquitoes that accompanied him from the very beginning of the trip, were gone. Forest froze, as it was waiting for something or someone. In this oppressive silence Raven felt he was not alone, instinctively checking the knife hanging from his belt, he decided to go up there where he saw the altar stone. Wade through thickets and rocks in the dark was a challenge. Carefully, trying not to break his legs, Raven climbed on a rock and sat on the edge of the cliff, the setting sun could be seen on the horizon, but the sky over his head was studded with stars.

Raven sat back starting to think, looking at the incomprehensible starry sky. He felt all the grandeur of the place, its age-old wisdom. He felt that these stones still remember the birth of humanity that passed before their eyes during countless ages. In the silence of the night forest Raven could only hear his breathing, he soon began to feel that the earth is breathing with him in unison. He felt himself lying on the back of an ancient mighty snake. He realized that this is not the rite of words and fire, that this ceremony began back then when he bought the tickets, or even earlier - when he made the decision to come here, he came here not by chance but fate brought him. The reality was slipping away from him, he felt that he falls into a dark abyss. A sudden gust of icy wind from nowhere, forced Raven to get up on his feet. From the side of the cliff thick darkness was rapidly bearing down on him, consuming all around, the cold penetrated his body, Raven felt the hairs on the back of his neck stood on end, quiet rustling behind him gave away someone's presence. For a split second Raven pulled out a knife and turned - what he saw before

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him, made him shudder with horror, appearing before him was a gloomy image of his nightmare. Eyes dimmed, his fingers limp loosened, and the knife fell from his hand.

-It's just a bad dream, just a nightmare - Raven tried to calm down. - Now I'll wake up, and you'll disappear ...

Raven was standing with his back against the edge of the cliff, there was nowhere to retreat further, and there was no way to dispel the delusion. Raven, still in disbelief, gave away a strangled whisper.

-Who are you? Why are you following me? - Instead of answering entity removed the hood from the head, and Raven saw a woman with white hair like snow. It was impossible to know how old she is. Her face was young and beautiful, but the long silver-gray hair spilled over her shoulders saying the opposite, and in the depths of her fathomless black eyes were shining stars ...

The darkness faded away, along with the fear. The stranger walked over and hugged and kissed him. Her lips were stung cold, whole body started to vibrate, in his head tornado spun, and a huge force of energy emanating from the woman in black, overwhelmed him. It was so monstrous that he could hardly contain his consciousness that it does not disintegrate into dust. A little more and the darkness of insanity would capture him, but Raven suddenly stopped struggling and let these energies in himself, they entered into a resonance with his consciousness, all the masks suddenly collapsed. And he, for a moment, felt like a fixed center of the universe, and danced around in a delightful circled cosmos with its countless galaxies and stars.

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Raven opened his eyes, everything blossomed. Stranger was no longer there, but he clearly felt her presence. He knew that she would never leave him, dissolving herself in him, in every cell of his body, in every drop of his blood. She came from an unknown world to Raven into his world and stayed there forever. Her perfect, like a cut diamond consciousness intertwined with the neurons of his brain, merged with it in a symbiotic relationship, he woke up changed. Going down to the creek to wash up, he saw her eyes in his reflection, and at that moment Raven came to realize who was an overnight guest. The Goddess Mara - the great goddess of winter cold, the night and the eternal sleep. The goddess of death and eternal life, leading her lovers to Immortality ...

II

Two days after Raven returned to the city, he began to notice how the things that used to seem commonplace and familiar are brought before his eyes in a completely new light.

And now, standing at the window, he shifted his gaze to the endless azure blue sky, the iron-gray and concrete monster, stretching under the windows of his skyscraper filled with meaningless scurrying mass of biological material.

"Cities - a cancerous tumor on the body of the earth," - thought Raven. This soulless hydra, named "metropolis", was grinding its gears into any human individuality, dissolving and depersonalizing it among the hundreds of thousands of humanoid clones. He, more than ever, felt that there is some powerful invisible force that controls this hydra, acquiring its power with help of the bodies and souls of men. Raven almost physically felt its cold sticky tentacles are drawing him, trying to absorb himself and everything that is dear to him.

"The slave system" - how many times Raven heard these words, but he never thought about it so deeply. Night on Devil's Castle, kiss of the Dark Goddess pulled him out of the shackles of the system, and now, standing at the window, looking at the city, Raven finally realized the true face of his enemy. At his heart was the flame of hatred, he longed to challenge his unseen enemy, and he vowed that he will fight to the last breath, and will not back down until the last beat of his heart. Raven closed his eyes, he clearly felt the presence of the Goddess.

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Show me the way - he whispered. Insistent phone call got through the veil of crazes.

Raven picked up the phone, call was from his old friend and ally, she was passing near him and decided to stop by. Raven smiled at synchronicity, her name was Margaret, but her friends called Margot.

- Margot, Mara, there's your sign - Raven thought.

He knew Margo for a long time now, she was a great artist and tattoo master, exactly two years ago, she gave him a tattoo on his shoulder. Margo was one of those rare girls who admired Raven. Apart from the fact that Mother Nature has bestowed upon her beauty and talent, she was a staunch supporter of the National-Socialist Movement and healthy lifestyle, and more, in addition, had the title of CCM in kickboxing, which was impossible to imagine looking at this seemingly fragile and comely creation . Margot and Raven often trained together, it was fun to see how it in sparring in a few minutes she was able to render inoperative any smug beginner who does not take seriously Woman with boxing gloves. She was a shining example of why anyone should never underestimate the enemy, Raven was always glad to see her.

Margo kissed him on the cheek. - Well, how are you brother? To the hell with the last year! - She thrust him into the hands a package.

- I was thinking a lot what to get you for present, hope you like it - she has thrown off the shoulder her gym bag.

- You came back from a workout? - Asked Raven, opening the gift. - Why are you ... - He didn't finish the sentence. -

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The gods! Unbelievable! - Raven looked at the picture, which Margo gave him, and could not believe his eyes - from the canvas Dark Goddess looked at him - a beautiful Mara, just as he remembered her from the Settlement, the incredible beauty of a woman of unknown age with white as snow hair, he felt dizzy because of such coincidences.

- Raven!? What's wrong with you? - Margo looked at him puzzled. - Your face is ... Something not right? Raven came to his senses - No. It's all right ... You're just an incredible artist! A wonderful picture, thank you.

- Oh well, come on - she waved relaxed, her face just glowed with happiness. -You got any plans for today? Do you remember you said you would like to learn knife fight? - Margot has made a significant pause and looked at him, as if assessing the effect her words produced on him.

-So, I recently met a very interesting guys, they have a knife fighting group on their own, anyone who brings someone there is responsible for them. It's very serious, I've been on a few workouts, I think that's what you're looking for. I'm on my way there, are you going?

Raven stopped being surprised, therefore, accepted her invitation for granted. It took him a few minutes to assemble and then they were walking along a busy street toward the bus stop. -Where are we going? - He asked.

-Today, we train in the park, but in general, training is usually held in different locations, no one knows in advance where, they receive notion about the place a few hours before the workout. Strict discipline, if you miss training without a good reason, you train no more. You

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arrive to the point by running, as a rule, five miles, if you do not run – you do not know where to train.

-Who's the coach? - Raven was intrigued. - I do not know who he is, no one knows his name and where he is from, and everyone calls him, simply instructor.

While getting to the venue, Raven analyzed the events of recent days. Everything that happened to him, it was a truly fate, and now every event that happens to him, had special meaning, he felt that the Goddess led him, and he was happy to follow her. Outwardly, he was cool and calm, but inside he was full of emotions. Raven realized that he had received an invitation and not by accident and that what was ahead of him – was something he searched for and wanted for many years.

Raven could not imagine himself without martial arts. He began as a child with Wushu, his parents gave him to the group of Wing Chun masters, and for nearly three years he was studying this style. At fifteen, while advancing greatly in this direction, he realized that this style, even though it was the most applied of all of the Chinese martial arts, didn't represent the full system without its spiritual foundations, and Raven, unused to stop half a way, has devoted two years of studying the basics of Taoism and Chan Buddhism. He devoted much time to daily practice of meditation, studied the works of Chinese thinkers and even planned a trip to the Chinese monastery in order to get direct access to the tradition, but in time realized that he cannot cheat his nature and being by blood and consciousness a western man he could understand the wisdom of the East, only theoretically, and he didn't want just to wear a Chinese mask. Training was not in vain, he realized that any martial art should be founded on

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spiritual basis and be part of a community of people. Then there was a karate style aikijutsu, as opposed to Wing Chun, with applied aspect of strong spiritual foundation, aikijutsu as a martial art was "remaking" of karate as a sport. After a few months of classes in this style Raven decided not to waste time, he was tired of the endless kata training in Japanese kimono and discourses about practicing samurai valor. Raven did not understand why talking about samurais here, on Russian land, when the ancestor Cossacks were slaying them mercilessly, but few people knew about this.

Many of his friends were engaged in Thai boxing, they even had a "real" team. The training was tough enough and seemed to Raven to be close to reality. For a year, he developed himself in this direction, quickly earning himself the glory of "thug" in the ring. He immediately entered into a state of frenzy, for him there was only one goal - to "win at all costs." Due to the lack of compromise and the will to win, he soon became one of the best in the group. But then he ran into another problem, the coach, seeing him as a huge potential, has been actively campaigning to get him into team for fighting competition. This, at first, even captured Raven, but with each victory sport was taking more and more time, and soon there was no any time left for anything except for sport halls, he practically "lived" there, he constantly imagined sky-high perspective of the championships, training in Thailand, earnings and fame. In the end, all of that became boring to him, Thailand, sports competitions and the championship - it's not something that he wanted; he would prefer Russian forests and mountains, with no desire to attract attention to himself. But he got a good basis for further improvement, building his blow, work with elbows and knees. Eventually, Raven came to the army fighting. This

was what he was looking for a long time, it's simple and honest – if there is an enemy they must be destroyed, extremely fast and hard. No sport, just tough, "prikladuha."³ By his twenty Raven has learned to filter out what he had been taught in order to know what "works" on the street, and what not. He tested everything in battle, the good fight in the streets with youth. Because of that he was not tied to any style and direction, and from every school he took what worked well and smoothly in combat. Preference was given to simple and effective techniques: low kicks to the joints, punches to the head, often with his fist and the base of the palm, hitting in the back of the head, with elbows and knees, hitting with his head. For a long time he retrained to beat low-kick not for sports, and to deliver them in the area of knee ligaments. Raven has come to the understanding of the martial arts, to which came the legendary Bruce Lee. He smiled when he saw Dzhitkundo followers blindly copying the teacher, Raven realized that Dzhit kun do is not just another style, as many people thought, it was an Idea and everyone had to create their own Dzhitkundo – their style, on the basis of a long and hard Practice. Each person is different; both physically and mentally, because of this Raven didn't want to be limited.

A real discovery for him was the knife fight, six months ago; he and some friends visited the Russian championship sporting knives combat. Among the many schools Raven chose a club, whose members have shown themselves to be most worthy fighters in the championship, but it soon became clear that the instructor, who trained him taught nothing of what would Raven like to learn. Knife fight was an endless exercise of symmetrical

³ Slang -прикладные боевые искусства - Applied Martial Arts

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contacts, "knife" - "knife", and was a young fast growing sport discipline. Fencing on the knives was relevant for the beautiful sport fight in the ring, but for Raven it was hard to imagine where he can apply the skills of fencing on the street, and although training has often included work on close knife sparring, it was still not what he expected from knife fight, but there was no other alternative at the time.

All gathered in a city park, dressed, with things in backpacks. Fifteen people gathered, including three women. Raven knew some people there, some right-wing activists he met in joint activities. Raven introduced himself to those whom he did not know, and then he was introduced to the instructor, they shook hands, and their acquaintance was over. Instructor didn't ask anything. Raven was here and that meant that someone already vouched for him, and said everything needed.

At the command of the instructor they threw their backpacks on the shoulders and run. Raven never ran much in his life, but this running caused him not too much trouble. Twenty minutes later, they ran into a small deserted clearing that was sufficient for the exercise. There was no time for break, throwing off their backpacks, all lined up. The instructor came forward. - The theme of today's lesson - melee work against unarmed opponent, armed with a knife, and work with a knife against a group, working spontaneous action with a knife at the sudden attack, and consolidation of what was learned in the last training session.

-Split into pairs, warm-up! - Ordered the instructor. Warm-up consisted of three five-minute exercises: the first was "tag", sparred no bumps on the hands, the second "tag" on their feet, and the third - the fight on their knees. The break

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between the exercises was about a minute. At the command of changing partners, stuffing began, their forearms, torso and legs.

-Strikes should not shock you in battle. - Explained instructor. - That is why in training you must experience full discomfort. In order to avoid interfering of stress in the battle, it must be experienced during the training, expanding the "stress zone". Remember - in training as in combat, in combat as in training!

Raven liked very much body packing exercises. The essence of the exercise was to stand opposite to each other to punch the chest in turns , the force of impact increases, and the exercise lasted as long as the shocks do not become unbearable, and one of practitioners do not give up. No one wanted just to play, because of this, exercise turned into a good workout for building combat morale.

-Finish the workout, go to practice. - The instructor took several combat knives. - The following exercise is a feeling of a knife. Stand in a circle, with two hands gripping the knife, and we throw it one to another, caught immediately tossed, without delay. Is that clear? Action!

Getting exercise done does not cause trouble. They were throwing knife easily from one to another, even had time to make jokes, but once the instructor let two knives into circulation, it was not fun. It required maximum concentration, assault weapons does not forgive mistakes, and as a result, some people have felt it, getting shallow cuts.

Then everyone took wooden knives, and began working out the basic techniques, it was a simple and mostly

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familiar to Raven. A simple army technique crosses, jabs, combinations of the cross - jab, jab - cut, cut - jab, work with knife - punch.

-Technique should be simple and effective, repeated thousands of times. This allows you to not think in knife fight and act at the level of reflexes - the instructor said, while watching workout. - In a knife-fight there's no place for complex and beautiful combinations, the work must be extremely tough and simple. Particular attention should be paid to working out a knife pulling out followed by immediate puncture or incision.

The instructor explained that this was the foundation of a fight with a knife, that which sets it apart from the sport knife fight, which is the degeneration of this ancient discipline.

-The current trend of knife fighting was created exclusively for clubs and schools earnings that train numerous "office planktons", instilling in them the illusion of safety - the instructor said dismissively.

- But they forget that the knife is the murder weapon, and that holding it in your hand means to be ready at any time to cross the line and kill the enemy. Remember the idea of fatal and non-fatal attack should not be in your head during the battle! No time to aim in the shoulder when the opponent is eager to plunge a knife into you. It is therefore important skill during a surprise attack or quick melee retrieval the usage of knife in combat. There is no such thing as separating "knife fight" and "unarmed fight", there is a complex work "unarmed fight - knife." Now we are working on pulling out knife quickly and using it instantly. So everyone take your knives, each one will perform this

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exercise with their weapons. On my command, as quickly as possible, pull out the knife and produce a series of blows to the imaginary enemy.

Despite the simplicity of the exercise, not all turned out well-coordinated while working on "extraction - a blow." This exercise, according to the instructor, is a base in a fight with a knife, so it needs to be fully automatic.

At the command of the instructor they finished the exercise. - We are finished with technique for today - the instructor said. - Now go to the sparring. Symmetric sparring "Knife - Knife" is rare, and if it is not ritual combat, it is doubtful that in real life you have to work in such a manner, however, sport schools are considered with practicing this particular manner of combat. We use these fights just as a training of distance, speed and techniques applied on a moving partner, rather than a stationary simulator. So now for the newcomer we will do our traditional round of sparring.

The instructor turned to the Raven: - In this exercise, you will work in a manner of "Knife - Knife" against each one for twenty - thirty seconds.

All stood around Raven and the instructor commanded: "Fight!" Thirty seconds later followed command, "Next!" Raven had difficulties with this exercise, the partners were changing, each had their weight and height, and their own style of battle, and Raven had to learn to quickly readjust for the next partner, a mistake made was followed by painful puncture or incision. Despite the "sportiness" of sparring, it has been an exercise in applied aspects. Raven was fighting for about ten minutes and by the end of the exercise he held himself up with the last effort, but all came

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to an end, the instructor gave the order: "Stop!" Exercise was over.

Then they worked out in detail several combinations of combat, repeated work on three levels and consolidated knowledge about areas that should be affected by knife, as well as the working out of an unarmed partner against the one armed with a knife.

-Now we will do an exercise that will help you to understand the difference between the practices of sport knife fighting and applied knife fighting - the instructor said.

-In addition, today we will also work on very fast pulling out the knife. Divide into groups of two - three men and stand in these groups along a single line, along which one person doing the exercise will have to go. That group, which I will point out, will suddenly attack one who is walking while they are passing these groups. One who is walking will not know which group would attack. We work without gloves, allowed are all kinds of attacks, the task of the one who is walking is to respond quickly to the attack, taking defense and pulling out the knife to apply it. We are ranking fast pulling out the knife and the subsequent destruction of the enemy. This exercise affects attention and intuition, a fighter learns to feel when group will attack. The attackers additionally will be working on technique of group interaction, training a well-coordinated group attack on the enemy.

All have gone through this exercise in turns. After that it was time for physical training, it was not meant to be distraction during the training, so it was done in the end. It was consisted of a classic five laps of "Cooper" army test

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so popular at a reception in the Special Forces. When this exercise was over, it was the time for mental preparation.

-Who now wants to step over the line? - Asked the instructor.

-For those who are here for the first time I will explain that this exercise teaches us to act more freely in combat, without falling into a stupor of fear of death. The instructor looked Raven into the eyes; Raven stepped forward, accepting a challenge.

Two guys took on painful control of Raven's arms, the third stood in front of him , behind, the instructor threw a rope around Raven's neck . On the command, one who stood in front of Raven began to strike him with hands and feet, gradually bringing them to blows in full force. Those standing on the sides intensified painful control on Raven's hand joints and instructor gradually tightened the rope around his neck. Raven strained neck muscles, growled, rushed forward, taking blows. Thirty seconds later he ceased to feel bumps, despite the fact that they were applied in full force, he felt the warmth spreads through his body and plunged into darkness. He did not notice the boundary transition, funnel started spinning in his head, and he again felt the Presence. He woke up from instructor's slapping of his face. - All rise.

Raven got to his feet and looked around, he still could not understand where he was and what happened.

- Welcome back, - smiled instructor. - Training is over, thank you for your diligence. Homework - spend a day with a knife in your hand. Everything must be done without letting the knife from your hand, a knife will

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eventually cease to be something separate from you, and you will feel it as an extension of your body. That's all until the next workout. One thing more, the next training session will be held in clothes you usually wear, jeans, sneakers, in a word that clothing and footwear you walk in every day on the street.

Raven continued to go to training. They were held in different locations, and the conditions were different, the winter training conducted outdoors in winter clothes, they were sparring on a slippery surface and in deep snow. Several sessions devoted to training in the stairwell of an apartment house, practicing in the entrance porch, climbing stairs and the elevator, entrance to the apartment, and actions of sudden attack at these places. Practiced were better attack options in the stairwell, the ability to quickly detect the presence of cameras, use clothes to disguise and ability to competently carry out exploration of the scene of the alleged attack. Instructor taught them to think, his goal was to raise the Warriors to think harmoniously, to combine logic and intuition in their training and in battle. Even public transportation has been a place for training. According to the instructor at the training it was important to experience all of the presumed collisions with the enemy, tested in a rigid form and repeated hundreds of times, they will not be surprised and will be allowed to act more relaxed in a real attack. Also they practiced all different combat options, in the supine position, in case knocked down, working on different surfaces: earth, gravel, asphalt. Soon the surface on which the training took place, did not matter, they all were feeling easy in the fall and worked brilliantly lying, with weapon and without it, as against the single attacker, and against groups. They devoted a lot of time working out surprise attacks, bringing the action in these situations

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to the level of reflexes. Psychological preparation played an important role in training. All conducting training were obligated to cut themselves with a knife and to sew up themselves, this allows more comfort with the cuts and gave them emergency medicine skills. The instructor was a supporter of radical and hard training methods . Several times he organized a visit to the morgue for a more accurate study of the location of vital organs and for a mental training - it was a good practice, according to the instructor, for extending the so-called "stress zone". On each workout they studied "lethal" work leading up to the technique automatism in affecting injuries on vital organs: the carotid arteries, heart, liver, inguinal triangle, femoral artery. They learned to work through the levels: groin, liver, throat, or vice versa. Stabbings and cuts were practiced not on static targets, but on moving sparring partners, the objective was affecting several attacks in the vital organs, leading to sure destruction of the enemy, and not just to poking with knife. Several trainings were done with wearing body armor, and studied peculiarities of a knife against a person protected by body armor, in this case attacks on the body were excluded, and the main objectives were getting throat and groin with the femoral artery. Additionally, each felt in practice how body armor shifts the center of gravity and they learned how to fight in it, given that it somewhat paralyzes usual melee combat..

Once a month they were doing sparring based on increased physical fatigue. To do this, after five kilometer cross, followed by five or seven turns of Cooper test, they would work on continuous fight on knees for five minutes, followed by a melee or knife fight. This develops skills of physical fatigue, and the ability to use reserves of the body, mobilizing it in combat. Often they practiced sparring circles, similar to what Raven experienced on his first

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training with this group. The instructor was not dogmatic and everything new that someone saw or heard was deconstructed at the end of training on basis of application, and if the technique was simple and useful, it is accepted as a part of the combat training.

Instructor taught several meditations that Raven often did when he went into the woods on the weekend. One of them was meditation performed at the full moon. Its goal was a quick dip into a trance. Its point was to look at the reflection of the full moon in the blade of the knife. Another exercise was feeling blade as part of the body. To do this, you first need to concentrate on the pulse in your hand, then clutching the blade with your fingers, as the practice is deepened you are gradually beginning to feel the pulse at the tip of the blade. When Raven first felt it, he felt a sense of fun and amazement, knife truly become an extension of his hands, and he felt his blade beating in his heart. Raven's favorite exercise was called "Breath of Stars." To do this in a starry night you had to get on the hill and to take the knife with both hands and arms forward with a blade pointing at the starry sky, relaxing start to inhale, visualize how the energy flows through the Cosmos to the blade, following inhalation as an antenna, flowing through the hands and body, leaving through the legs into the Earth. This exercise allowed feeling of a canal connecting the Earth and Space, an integral part of the Trinity: Space - Man - Earth. Another exercise - practice of walking blindfolded during the night in the woods, aimed at developing intuition and the ability to "see with the body." Initially, Raven often ran into the bushes and trees, but after a couple of months of training he was able, to predict, with some unknown sense when the tree is on the path. To study the internal fears, the instructor taught the exercise "Thousand Steps". Exercise was done in the night in the

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woods, blindfolded. One had to go ahead, making each step in a heartbeat, concentrating on inner feelings, after a thousand steps, the blindfold was removed and meditation was conducted on the place where one finished exercise. Often when Raven opened his eyes, he saw the forest in a different light; it was like another dimension in which he stepped invisibly during the exercise. Forest, blindfold and steps into the unknown strongly activated unconscious processes, rising to the surface of consciousness different repressed memories and fears, allowing them to recognize, and thus get rid of their toxic and blurring influence on consciousness.

Raven often thought that there were some secrets in knife combat, which instructor still did not reveal. This feeling never left him, and, one day, he directly asked about this, the instructor smiled and told him that there are two secrets, and one of them he will reveal to him. They agreed to meet on Saturday in the country near the border of the forest, uniforms - sneakers and tracksuit.

On Saturday, at the appointed hour Raven was in place, there were many different, lengthy, cycle tracks and footpaths going from there.

The instructor was waiting for him.

-Welcome! What was your longest run? - He asked, shaking hands with Raven.

- Five kilometers, or something like that - Answered Raven.

- Now I will run with you half-marathon - twenty one kilometer.

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There is a very scenic route - the instructor said, pointing toward the woods. Remember Raven, running - "Meditation of a Warrior", it is the most functional for psychological training of a fighter and their endless development.

- This is the secret? - Raven looked at the instructor with undisguised surprise, he did not realize that there can be something special in long distance running, of course, confused, because jogging was not something that Raven expected.

-Yes - said firmly instructor. - And, despite all the apparent simplicity of today's exercises, you will soon understand all its effectiveness.

They briefly warmed up and ran down the forest path. Spring was in full swing, the snow disappeared recently, and the forest was feast for the eyes with its first tender green color, gentle spring sun shone from a cloudless sky, birds chirping in countless voices, rejoicing occurring warm, welcoming land awakening from its winter sleep. The air was fresh and clean and enabled Raven to run his first five kilometers very easily, he ran, while enjoying the beauty that reigned around, and it seemed to him that he can run indefinitely. An hour later and ten kilometers were behind, Raven felt the tension in the legs and prominent fatigue, he did not look around, and tried to stay focused only on the run. Half an hour later they were running around fifteen kilometers, and Raven remembered instructor's parting words about Meditation of a Warrior, running was hard, he stopped to notice what was happening around him, he listened more to himself and his own feelings, tension grew in the legs, Raven saw only a

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section of road in front of him and only heard his breath. With this awareness strange things become happening, the boundary between the inner and the outer world had become blurred, it was a feeling that everything was somehow unreal. From the depths of consciousness rose all suppressed conflicts and problems, and in some unknown way Raven began to unravel this tangle. At eighteen kilometers Raven realized that he is running right only when focusing attention on instructor's elbow while running, and only this at moment returned him to reality, but only briefly, in a second real world again dissolved, and he ran alone, alone in the world.... There was nothing, no forests, no instructor, and the world itself existed not, he was a shell without a thought driven by an unknown force. But in some remnants of thoughts Raven knew he will reach the finish whatever it takes. Ravines, crossing the road, considerably complicated this challenging task, calves seemed ready to explode and burn unbearable fire, but at some point, Raven began to feel within himself some unknown source of power that forced him to move forward against the backdrop of incredible fatigue. He could not understand where this source was located in the back of his mind or outside, but as a clear boundary between inside and outside is no longer there it was not possible to find out its location. Raven realized that by turning off his mind and merging with this thread, he was able to overcome many of the internal and external borders and obstacles. With this awareness Raven overcame the last kilometer, and with Instructor, making a circle, he came back to the place from which they left two hours ago.

Instructor patted Raven on the shoulder:

-Congratulations on your first half-marathon! And now, the second secret. The second secret is that line separating

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Instructor of knife-fight and the Master, it is important in overcoming human dogma - killing your own kind. During this practice, done for more than one or two times, Master of knife is born. Realize these two secrets, and you realize that you do not need to ask any questions and look for something outside; you realize that everything is inside of you, all knowledge and truth. Suppressed civilization of ancient warriors will awake in you. Son of Heaven and Earth. You yourself will become a source of knowledge, truth and cosmic justice. But for others you'll be only a instructor, because everything else will be your secret, hidden from the rest. Ability to mask in society is an important skill, and like with everything else experience is acquired. Learn to comprehend your limits and overcome them in achieving the goals, and by doing so come to the realization of your destiny. Instructor's words penetrated deep into the Raven's consciousness without encountering obstacles of weary ego. Words penetrated and gained life in Raven's head, as if it was his thoughts, and he knew it all before, but just forgot, and now remembered.

-Well, see you in training - instructor shook Raven's hand in farewell.

-Relax, I advise you take a hot bath with salt, the first two hours can be bad, do not be afraid, let go, it always happens at the beginning. And one more thing- In a couple of weeks, my wife and I are planning trip to the nature, will you come with us?

-Yes, I will definitely go! - Said Raven, sincerely glad because of the unexpected opportunity to talk with the instructor, he felt that this man hid a mystery, they talked for almost a year, and Raven never knew anything about him, not even his name.

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Raven poorly remembered how he got to the bus stop, and when he sat down on a seat on the bus, for a moment he lost his consciousness. When he awoke, he saw passengers looking at him. Apparently he was taken for a drunk. But Raven did not care, he had an invaluable experience today, opening at the back of his mind, under layers of masks and social roles, *Eternal Sunshine of the Black Sun*. In all of that he learned to use found source of strength, and long-distance running was the key to this. At distance there is only one enemy - you, or rather, part of you which is too human, self-pity, the weakness of the physical body, laziness, and with every kilometer it is a struggle to grow stronger and fiercer. Running - a path through the pain and suffering to the heights of the human spirit, because in addition to management and control, once limit is passed brings with it the triumph of victory, the realization that you became stronger, fitter and more determined. Each new distance expands your human potential, not only in sports but also in life, and only you yourself define the boundaries, when you look forward to the endless kilometers of eternal Path to Perfection, from human to Superman - from Will to Triumph!

When Raven went to the elevator, he looked himself in the mirror and recoiled. His face was white as snow. Raven startled, ran his fingers over his face, and suddenly realized that small salt crystals covered his face.

III

At the station reigned unimaginable throng opening the holiday season, and the townspeople, in anticipation of May bank holiday, rushed to their private plots. Raven found Instructor in suburban offices; he spoke passionately about something with high comely woman with long fiery red hair plaited in a tight braid. Noticing Raven, he waved his hand in greeting, inviting him to join. Raven came over and said hello. - Meet my wife Olga - instructor introduced his companion. Raven was struck with her eyes more than her appearance - green, bottomless and fascinating.

-Pleased to meet you Raven! - She said, charming, smiling.

- Well, - the instructor threw a huge backpack on his shoulders. - Let's go to the train, arrival is already announced.

Three hours later, they arrived at destination. The station was a small platform surrounded by deaf forest, through which led the trail barely noticeable to the eye. Coming in from the woods about five miles away, they came across the beautiful forest lake, which stretches along the shore of a small village of seven houses. Nothing spoke of presence of the people in them, he could not hear any noise, no barking watchdogs, only old spruce branches, and magpies fluttering worried, screeching loudly, disappearing into the woods.

-No one lives here? - Raven asked.

-The village is very old, the last old man took the children to the city, and nobody lives here. In late May, a few

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families come for the summer, but the rest is peace and quiet here. We love being here; now, in suburbs you can find a little solitude. House of instructor was on the outskirts of the village, at the edge of the forest. It was an ordinary log cabin, not standing out among the other village houses. Inside, it was cozy and without frills, in the kitchen Russian oven, oak table with old wooden chairs, carved cabinet with handmade dishes and a room with a small bed, laid by a blanket of sheepskin. Under the ceiling were hung bunches of dried herbs, it smelled of tree, wormwood and Hypericum. Around the house Raven noticed many different ceremonial dolls of straw and shreds of tissue.

-My grandmother was a sorceress, - said Olga, noticing Raven's interest. -These are her dolls, this knowledge was handed down from mother to daughter, and they cherish home and the people, each has their own purpose. Here I made this doll for you - Olga took in her hands from the shelf a little doll with needlework and handed it to Raven. - I knew that you were coming, and I made it. Take it, for remembrance. Raven was stunned with surprise and embarrassed took Olga's gift. -This Podorozhnitsa is keeper on the road, if you are going somewhere, take it with you, it's a nice fellow traveler. -Olga looked at Raven as if knew his Fate, and the piercing gaze of her emerald eyes, brought cold into his heart.

Day was nearing end.

-We've got to - Olga said softly, glancing at the sky.

The instructor nodded and turned to Raven.

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-We want to show you another amazing place; it is very ancient, and marked by the gods. What happens today there must remain a secret, as the place itself. Evening forest looked like an animated illustration of a fairy tale, and Raven felt that he would not be surprised if they come across the Dragon or witches hut on their way. Dusk played tricks with vision, Raven, then noticed silently moving shadows behind them. Perhaps he was just imagining things, fueled by a sense of suspense and mystery, he thought ... Maybe ...

Human path has long ended; Olga went ahead, leading them following her landmarks. After some time, their path crossed a deep ravine overgrown with hazel and honeysuckle, but Olga, with confident movement pulled apart branches and slid deeper, Raven and instructor followed. On the steep path leading to the bottom of the ravine, were cut excavation steps that greatly facilitated the descent. Downstairs was cool and damp, creeping fog was making landscape sinister. After a few meters, they came to the steps leading upstairs. - We came - with mild solemnity, Olga said, running up the narrow earthy stairs. - Raven behold, here is our temple! Sight brought before the eyes of the Raven, was truly amazing. In the center of an extensive forest clearing two trees grew together - as Olga told later, the tree was one, but once upon a time it was struck by lightning which split it, but it did not die, the tree continued to live with two bodies and a single root, like the Great Cosmic Tree. Now Raven realized how Gods touched this place. It was a miracle that from the roots of a tree spring flowed, forming a small stream. Second thing that Raven noticed were large boulders buried in the ground, similar to the ones he had seen in Gorodistze, some were covered with moss and lichen, indicating their antiquity. Stones were not randomly scattered across the

clearing, but formed a perfect circle, it could hardly be a coincidence.

Instructor slammed Raven's shoulder, to bringing him out of stupor - Come on Raven, we should find firewood, until it gets dark and while we can still see something. There were a lot of dry trees around, and for a half an hour they were gathering it, clasped it in the center of the stone circle making a large bonfire, and then went to the stream to wash. They silently approached Olga, she was dressed in a long white linen shirt, collar, hem and sleeves were decorated with traditional Slavic embroidery and shirt was picked up by a thin red belt on waist. Over that shirt she was wearing a red cloak of fine wool with a hood; hair was gathered and tied with a scarlet ribbon. Olga gathered water in a wooden ladle, whispered something over it, and handed it to the instructor; he took one sip of it and passed it to Raven. Icy spring water was slightly sweet and refreshing, Raven drunk and gratefully returned the ladle to Olga.

When finally it was dark, instructor lit a fire. On white linen by the fire ritual objects were lying: a sickle and a shamanic drum. Olga took off her robe and her hair, her fiery locks were scattered over the body. Reflections of flame played in her emerald eyes, she was divinely beautiful. Olga came to the fire and threw into it the sheaf of dry grass, the bitter spicy smell spreads all around.

Instructor started slowly and rhythmically tapping the drum, Olga took off her belt and threw it into the fire, symbolically breaking the connection with the real world. Bonfire, began to flare stronger with new fuel, Olga took with her left arm a sickle, gently stepping, started to move around a campfire counterclockwise. Rhythm became

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stronger and more energetic, has been thumping mad, its pulsating shook space around. Olga like ancient deity of fire, spinning with a sickle in a frenzied dance, was filled with primitive power, animal power and irresistible passion. Raven watched Olga with admiration, energy of her dance pierced his body, he saw the true natural paganism, alive and real, how it must have been in ancient times, the unity of man, earth and space, expressed through dance, without the rants and trappings that were overcrowding those rites of modern Magi and sorcerers Raven met. Finishing dance Olga passed by Instructor and Raven gently circling each one with the sickle, she said:

-In the name of Mara, let all that is unnecessary and obsolete depart from you - she kissed instructor on the lips, and the Raven's on cheek finishing rite. Then, they sat for long by the dying fire, Olga was quietly humming, her voice was soft and melodious, and Raven, picking up a knife, started meditating, watching the glare of fire play on the cutting edge of the blade.

While they were coming back home Raven asked Olga:

-I've never seen or met anything like that, if it's not a secret, where that dance comes from? Which tradition it belongs to? - It's no secret - Olga smiled. - It came to me from within. The place itself, earth, stones and stars whispered to me dance moves. I feel when I have to come to this place to drink and dance the dance, and that depended on the natural cycles of the stars. Grandmother was teaching me to collect herbs and helped me develop this ability in me, she taught me, when and in what season to collect plant or something other, the morning dew, at dusk or during the full moon. She taught me to speak with trees and grasses, thank the earth for her gifts, collecting berries and

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mushrooms in the forest. She managed to save my soul and its relationship with the land in this modern materialistic world. -They continued to walk in silence; Olga still went ahead, with confident step wading in the darkness of the night forest.

Gray shadow glided softly through the trees, Olga stopped and pointed to a tree, a few steps ahead.

-A good sign. -Olga said. A large owl sat motionless on a branch and stared at them with its big yellow eyes not blinking. Raven quietly came and stood next to Olga. "Guuu"-Olga made the drawl noise through the castle folded hands, imitating the cry of the owl. Bird livened up "Gu Gu Gu" abruptly and loudly replied owl, craning its neck and gently rocking massive head, and then it quietly, despite its size, flew off the branches, and flying over their heads, hid in the woods.

-Owl, bird leading to the hidden, seeing in the Darkness. Forefathers said that the goddess of the night often takes the shape of an owl - Instructor said, looking thoughtfully at Raven. -Such meetings, especially after the ceremonies are never by chance. Further way home was uneventful.

In the morning Instructor and Olga accompanied him to the train, they invited him to stay a few more days, but Raven had some urgent business in town, and though he wanted to accept their invitation, he was forced to go. Instructor, seeing Raven genuinely upset by the fact that he could not stay, promised that they are going to get out

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all together here for a week, for example, in June, at Kupala⁴.

⁴ Celebration of Kupala – Ancient Slavic deity of fertility and joy. This celebration is still practiced today among many Slavic nations.

IV

Heavy dark clouds hung over the forest, threatening to break out into the rain, cold dense fog covered the earth with white shroud. It was hard to see anything in the dairy mist, only distant flashes of lightning occasionally illuminating dark night sky... Moving at random, up the hill and down the dale, shadow of the black bird glided over the Earth, cleaving fog with sharp wings, quiet sad music beckons him away... Slowly he was making his way through the tall and wet grass, moving forward, obeying a strange call. A strong gust of wind scatters the mist, and Raven sees a girl, she stands with her back to him, her short blue dress, and her long amber-colored hair fluttering in the wind, in the left hand she squeezes violin.

Breeze brings to his feet white sheets of paper covered with script notes and crimson drops of blood...

He comes closer and gently puts his hand on her shoulder, the girl falls, Raven picks her up, pressing her against his chest... Her skin was deathly pale, her eyes opened wide, muddy tightened veil, frozen tears, once pretty face disfigured with terrible bruises, clothes torn and bloodied, and her throat slit from ear to ear, stomach ripped. Horrified, he pulls away from her, jumping to his feet. Cosmic cold alerted him of the presence of the Goddess, she stood at the corpse of a girl gesturing at something behind him, feeling bated danger Raven opens his eyes and looks... Dream... All was just a bad dream.

Twice a week, in addition to basic training and running, Raven practiced on the bar and parallel bars in a park on the outskirts of the city. July was hot, but the last heavy rains brought by the evening freshness and coolness.

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Raven liked much more training out on the fresh air than inside of stuffy gyms, he finished the last exercise when the girl passed him by, he noticed she was strangely familiar to him... Long blonde hair, blue dress and a violin case... A chill ran down his spine when Raven realized where he met her- terrible vision appeared before his eyes again... She sat down on the bench, took the player and fully focused on it, not noticing anything around, and yet she should be more careful. Driving off memories of dream, Raven noticed that she was sitting on a bench close to two obvious felons. Faces not burdened by intelligence and pricked blue fingers, immediately told to an experienced eye that they belong to the lower strata of criminal society. By the way they threw cautious looks at girl and whispering, he concluded that they had followed her for some time. Raven decided, at first, not to go and see how events will unfold on. After some time, the girl looked at her watch and hurriedly throwing player in her bag, tossed her fiddle over her shoulder and went to the bus stop on the other side of the park. After waiting for a few seconds, the two got up and followed her. Suspicious of their intentions Raven could do nothing but to believe his dream - for her, this walk could be the last. He threw his hood on and went after them. Trying to be unnoticed, Raven was developing action plan on the go. Meanwhile, the pursuers, making sure there was nobody around, went to take decisive action. One was showing to another, by mimicking, how they need to overtake and block her way, and he nodded taking a stride. There was no time for thinking so Raven came out of the shadows of the trees on the road.

-Guys, can you tell me what time is it? - He yelled out the first thing that came to his mind. One of them cursed

aloud, unable to contain his frustration because of the unexpected disruption.

Raven glanced at the girl; she went blissfully unaware of what was happening behind her. He was surprised, despite the fact that death was breathing on her neck, she had not even looked around, apparently the music in her headphones was louder than the voice of reason and self-preservation.

Staying without their prey subhuman burned with aggression from the comprehension of their failure, deciding to take it on originator of the incident they went to Raven.

- Oi, cormorant what do you need? You fucking decided to be fucked up? - Exposing bad teeth, said first, trying to draw attention to him, while the other one behind Raven's back was getting ready to push him down. Proven tactics and operating smoothly, but Raven knew how to act and was prepared for situation like this one.

Raven assessed the situation; there were no unnecessary witnesses around. Not showing aggression, he pretended not to understand what is happening.

-Yes, what's the problem guys, I really just wanted to ask the time. - Raven said closing the distance, coming within striking range, he swiftly struck the first one twice in the head, and not giving him the time to recover, grabbing his neck with both hands and turned back to the second, blocking strikes coming from there. With strong penetration of knee in the groins of the first one, he easily knocked him to the ground and switched to the second one, assessing the situation, this other guy put his hand in

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his jacket pocket, trying to get something. Raven was not clear if that was a knife or a baton, but they worked out situations like this to automatism in training, the instructor more than once said that it is not necessary to wait until the enemy gets a weapon; you need to be ahead of him and destroy him. Enemy decided to use the weapon first, and in this situation the use of Raven's knife was justified. He immediately took out his knife and stabbed the enemy in the neck with strong blow from the side. It was the first time that Raven did not use weapons in training, but in a real fight, however there was no big difference. Shortly it seemed like time slowed down and he saw the knife in the moment of piercing skin of enemy's neck, being as sharp as a razor, and at the same moment it immediately plunged to almost half way in the neck near the carotid artery, as through the butter. Raven pulled out knife very fast. Enemy, wheezing, grabbed his throat. Under the hand with which he tried to close the wound, powerfully pulsing scarlet arterial blood, was quickly leaving his body. At this time, the first opponent, mumbling vaguely, was trying to get on his feet. It was obvious that he cannot leave him alive. He grabbed enemy by the collar lifting him and struck five or six times with a knife in the area of the liver and heart.

When everything was over, Raven looked around, there were no witnesses anywhere near, and he had to get out of this area as soon as possible. He ran through the park towards the industrial area. Raven caught himself thinking that using knife for the first time was easier than his first time in street fight. Before he run out of the park, he remembered that his jacket could have traces of blood. Raven quickly took it off and threw it in a backpack. In order to get away from the place of the fight he walked toward the neighboring district, where he quietly boarded

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the bus and went home. Just a few blocks from the house he threw a jacket in the trash and went towards the house courtyard. Arriving home, Raven replayed again in his head what happened. He remembered that for a moment he lost his personality and felt hands of Death – the very hands of Mara. He was surprised that despite his crossing of the line and killing a man he did not feel any remorse about it. Some ancient stratum of awareness awakened in him, to use the weapon in combat and destroy enemies became something ordinary for him...

First thing is to get rid of the knife - thought Raven. It was a difficult decision for him, as the knife was a part of him, and Raven performed the ceremony, burying him in the woods outside the city, like a close friend. The next day he bought the same type of knife. After that, he made another important decision - to find a worth of dying "sacrifice," and to consciously use a knife to kill the enemy. He had to understand what he is experiencing at the moment of the murder and afterwards. Somewhere deep down, he knew that the act - is the key to the door, behind which is the Abyss, where he will find the answers to all of his questions. The door opened where he meets his true self, deprived of masks, dogma and morality of rotten society - an ancient warrior belonging to filth cleansing clan. Filth of those who are escaping punishment, using abstract laws of the State. These laws existed not for Raven, his law was the law of Honor.

A week after the incident, Raven winced at every call on the door, he thought that someone had seen him during the fight or one of the two survived and will testify. But those were just feelings; logic dictates that it was not true: all happened suddenly, he was in the hood, making it

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difficult to obtain description from possible bystanders, if there were any, and he took care of knife properly...

A week later, Raven stopped listening to the footsteps outside the door in anticipation of police, and life returned to normal.

V

During the year, after the incident in the park, Raven used the knife several times in the street fights, both alone and with his comrades in real actions. This year has changed Raven a lot. His character had become stronger. Much of what was unnecessary and extraneous, formed by society, school and family was gone, replaced by a simple and straightforward ancient warrior instincts controlled by principle of inner Honor. He learned how to live in society and at the same time not to be a part of it. He became invisible and imperceptible. Deeds became priority, and fashion and everything superficial was pushed in background. He dressed unobtrusively trying not to be noticeable. Outwardly, nothing suggested he was into NS. He stopped attending noisy social events, rallies and concerts, and the majority was convinced that Raven left the Movement. Raven even created several accounts in the social networks, in which he showed quite a normal life and interests and his social circle was very different from a circle of his true friends, and things that interested him in real life. With true companions he did not communicate on the Internet. In short Raven learned to be "shapeshifter". Even local police was sure Raven "come to his senses," this was something Raven sought for.

He continued to communicate with a small group of companions, many of whom he had known since childhood. Nobody else got in their circle. They trained together and often planned various actions. Emotions coming from the use of a knife subsided after a while, replaced by a cold mind. This was manifested in the fact that, before Raven was doing large number of random knife attacks driven by emotions, and his hand was severely strained and stiffness was noticeable in his

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movements, he now tried to apply more accurate punches in the most vulnerable places, and to be concentrated only on a hit. He devoted more time to planning, carefully thinking about everything, and sometimes training, and testing were taking much time. There were no emotions to overshadow the mind. Over time, his fighting technique, melee and knife, changed, somewhat becoming more simple. Raven kept only the most simple and practical movements and combinations. After every fight he carefully analyzed the details, drawing conclusions, so that the next fight can be more clear and professional. He understood that technique was not the most important, but the psyche and its readiness to fight, willingness to kill, if needed. Raven was able to get job done and to leave behind a feeling of absolute power and pleasure similar to orgasm, which occurred when he took the life. Over time Raven formed a special "predator instinct". He learned to feel "victim". Marena guided him. He constantly felt her invisible presence.

More often, Raven asked himself big questions - why the Goddess chose him, whether he chose his own path or not, and what is his ultimate goal... But in his immediate surroundings there was no one with whom he could share his feelings, not that he was afraid of being perceived as a madman, just hardly any of his friends would be able to understand and give a practical advice. Perhaps the only person to who Raven could open his soul was the instructor, so Raven arranged meeting with him. By that time Olga and instructor finally moved out of the city to live on land, and not on the asphalt. Raven also was tired of the city and was glad to escape for a few days into ancient silence on the lap of nature. He remembered path perfectly and he found easily Instructor's house. Raven

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perfectly oriented in the woods and accurately memorized the route that he once walked.

In the evening, at the request of Raven, they walked to the sacred glade, where the instructor encouraged him to test their skills, and in the circle of stones, in the firelight, they arranged sparring training with knives.

-Your technique has changed, became simpler - said instructor. It is right - you can not be rigidly attached to a rigid form. Essence is important - form changes. Ideally, everyone should come to own expression in unarmed and armed combat. We all have different body structure, different length of arms and legs, weight, temperament, in the end, it is difficult to create something universal. Only basics can be trained, to set one in the right direction, the rest comes with practice itself.

-Recently, I was surrounded by too many deaths - Raven said reflectively. -Sometimes, looking into the eyes of a dying victim, I notice that I revel in the moment of death - at this moment I feel like something in me awakens, something ancient and inhuman. And at the same time, I often think about what the price of human life is... I see that only on the verge of death, one becomes aware of the true value of his life, I can see how eager they are to get a second chance... to become different, to try and fix something... But I take from them this opportunity. And sometimes, I'm not sure if I'm doing everything right.

For a few minutes, they walked in silence, and suddenly Instructor stopped:

-All your victims will always be with you, - he said, staring into Raven's eyes - We can not, as hypocritical Christians

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beg for forgiveness afterwards, because the choice of "sacrifice" should be treated seriously and should never be guided by emotions and ego. Cosmos and Earth itself must select them by your hands, and this is why it is necessary to improve intuition. But in all there should be balance, it is not necessary to become a butcher. Murder is a means, not a goal. Important is how you change with every act of "selection". Each time you die more, continuing to live in the physical body, looking farther behind the line beyond which people with ordinary life has no access, where they come into this phenomenal world and where they go after death. But, by opening up access to this area you can not remain the same, each time you'll change. Each time, the Abyss will intrude into your mind increasingly. And not everyone is able to withstand this without consequences for the psyche. In short - by killing someone every time you are killing a part of yourself... Because of this, path is only for a few. Not many are willing dying in life...

Raven was looking into Instructor's eyes, and every word echoed in his heart. At this moment he saw in his eyes the same radiant abyss of the cosmos, same one he saw in the eyes of the Goddess. - Dying in life.... Yes, it was the answer to all of his questions, everything what he craved for and everything he wanted...

-It is important to choose the right motivation for a deed - continued Instructor. -Each elimination should not carry a strong emotional charge. Like in the special forces - it's not a "man" but "object". If there is a goal - "object", it is necessary to destroy it. The object is not a person, it's an empty meaningless place. Especially when it comes to your goals, then essentially things are like this. Human is something you have to become. To just sleep, eat, and go

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to work for the benefit of the System does not make a being human.

-This is true - Raven agreed. - I have long understood the difference between biological waste and human. I think I understand what I need to do next, but do not know how to realize it, in my head there are so many thoughts, but it is like something prevents this mosaic to emerge into a single pattern.

The instructor nodded:

-I didn't leave the city accidentally, here on Earth it is easier to hear your true self, and it is important for you to now realize your Destiny and to follow it, but it's hard to do such thing, living in a hectic city. You need to retire in solitude in a secluded spot in nature, it requires months, three to six months, for each is different. The more accustomed to civilization, the more time you need to spend alone. But for starters, I would advise you to go on a couple of weeks on the Kola Peninsula and marching through Lovozero tundra near Seydozero. Places there are ancient, strong. Homeland of Lapland shamans. About them and their powers legends were told, and this power came out of the place on which they were living. There is a belief that the area of Seydozero was the location of Hyperborea. Believe it or not, it's not so important, it is important that this place is, in fact, changing people. In September there are no many tourists there. Mountains are not high, but there are hard northern conditions, we have been there many times and will be back again and again. There, on Seydozero, the line between the worlds is thin, and for those who sincerely follows the Path many secrets are revealed, things you cannot read about in books. I think, that in such places you can find answers to your

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questions. I will give you a map, on it you have marked route. We developed it carefully, and except for me and Olga, already few companions before you walked this path. This place affected them strongly, they left part of them to Seydozero, and Seydozero left part of it in them. So this is a kind of tradition.

VI

One and a half days on the train from Moscow to Murmansk passed unnoticed. Raven came out in the early morning at the train station of the city Olenegorsk. There was a bit of drizzling rain. In the autumn it was cold, although in central Russia early August was mostly very hot. In the North, the summers are short, and there are very few warm days. Raven came to the station square, on Olenegorsky station located far from the city, and near Karnasurtskogo Loparinov's mine, from which the route begins, and could be reached in several ways: First, by using the bus, not the most convenient option, because, before reaching the village Revda you have to walk on foot to the mine for about seven kilometers. The second option was to use the services of enterprising privateers who are on duty at the station and who offer ride to the mine, but Raven was warned that they take the double price. Third, the easiest and most reliable way was to call a taxi from Olenegorska, which he did, and after twenty minutes, he reached the target, putting his backpack in the trunk. Before they reached the mine, for about eighty kilometers Raven and taxi driver were talking and Raven learned a lot of useful information on the weather, the number of tourists etc. Forty minutes later, the car stopped near the check point before entering the area of the mine. After the mine there were Karnasurt mountains on the left and Kedykvarpahk on the right, between them was Elmorayok - path to Seydozero. The rain stopped, the sky cleared up and allowed him to see the stone giants in all their glory. Mine "Karnasurt", built in the forties, was engaged in mining of ore loparite - raw material for the production of rare metals. Loparite was radioactive, causing the path to have slightly increased radiation, but its influence was insignificant.

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Wide dirt road along the mine soon ended and it was replaced by a distinguishable trail. Raven did not regret that he took with him a stick for trekking, climbing over huge boulders and balancing with a heavy backpack on his shoulders without it would be difficult. Way to the top took more than an hour, flat rocky plateau, which was in front of Raven was hard to climb, it became clear why these mountains are called tundra.

Uniqueness of this place is that it is perhaps the oldest mountains on the planet; there was this mountain range about 350 million years old. Mountains of Lovozero tundra were low - an average of no more than a kilometer, albeit with very steep slopes. Tops are flat and almost perfectly aligned, so that visually determining exactly where you are can be very difficult. Map of Lovozero Massif was like a shell, in centre of which was the sacred jewel - Lake Seydyavvr, which translated from Sami means "Holy (Seid) Lake (Yavvr)" later it became known simply as Seydozero. At the tops path was constantly disappearing, Raven was guided largely by a small stone seids⁵, who laid out the tourists in the right direction serving as some kind of pointers. Soon path took him straight down, and on slopes appeared first green vegetation, mainly shrubs and dwarf birch of bizarre shapes, but they were joined below with spruce, forming rather dense taiga, through which he had to go a few more hours. When Raven was already pretty exhausted, making his way along a narrow path through fallen trees and rocks, among the treetops mountainside of Kuyvchorr appeared, which clearly stood

⁵ **Seid** – rus. “сейд” some sort of sacred objects for north-European peoples i.e. Russian, Scandinavian. These objects mostly were used to mark some *place of power* in nature.

out like a huge figure of man in traditional shamanic clothing common for this area. According to legend this was the owner of these places - the giant Kuyva, after whom the mountain was named, Raven read a lot sinister and mystical stories about him. Kuyva drove imagination, but did not look quite so sinister, contrary, to Raven it seemed that he kindly and encouragingly was waving his hand, indicating that the goal is near. On the right there was a small crystal-clear lake, and there the path forked, Raven confidently chose the road leading to the right and, after another three hundred meters, passing the swamp, he came near to Seydozero by nicely done flat clearing made for parking, near Kuyva. Finally dropping backpack Raven, admiring the lake, set up camp and wasted no time, hastening to Kuyva. According to tradition, he took with him some bread and nuts as required offering to the owner and guard of Seydozero. Raven stood before the hundred-meter cliff that resembled the image of Kuyva. Despite the fact that it has long been known about the natural origin of the image, explorers of Hyperborea and ufologists continued to develop around it the most incredible stories from aliens to Prometheus, chained to a rock, not seeing the real miracle is that for centuries Nature herself formed this image of the Northern shaman giant, numerous streams, moss and lichen on the surface of the cliff, which was constantly crumbling without distorting the image. Miracle was in the fact that unlike the image made by human hand, static in time, Kuyva was really alive, and, depending on a variety of natural and not only natural factors its shape changed, conveying to the mind of the common man incomprehensible essence - the essence out of time. Raven felt this clearly standing in front of it. Kuyva was older than all of the legends made about it. He was as old as the mountains surrounding Seydozero, as he saw more, more he remembered. Mountains, the lake and

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Kuyva were manifested as part of a very ancient form of consciousness, much older than the history of mankind, old as the planet Earth itself. This awareness penetrated into the consciousness of Raven, and he felt his strength and greatness.

Raven for a moment, became a part of this complex matrix, losing his identity ...

An hour later, Raven went back to his camp. It was located not far from the sand spit at the confluence of the river Elmorayok in Seydozero. From this place Kuyva was clearly visible, Raven sat on a large rock near the water and closed his eyes, listening to the rustle rhythmic waves broken by bursts of boat oars. The boat glided towards him, ran by a man of sixty years or so.

On the lake the boat could only be used by rangers, he probably noticed a tent and decided to check if everything was in order. Seydyavvr was Nature Reserve and its safety was keenly watched.

- Good day, - he said, coming up with Raven.- Not the best place you choose to stay at, young man. The old man does not like it. Although, frankly, he is surprisingly quiet. It is obvious that he like you.

- Alexander Mihailovich, a ranger's assistant – getting out on the shore, the man introduced himself, with a picky glance he looked at Raven's camp.

- Raven, - he said, shaking old man's outstretched hand.

- What are you looking here, young man? Hyperborea? - Grinning, asked Mikhailovich.

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- No, more like a true self - seriously Raven replied to him.

Raven saw in the eyes Mikhailovich lively interest, it was evident that he was not averse to continuing the discussion. Raven did not mind, on the contrary, he knew that the ranger's assistant was a storehouse of useful information, and a chance to find out all about these places, the chance he should not miss.

- Would you like a cup of tea with me Alexander Mihailovich? I just boiled the kettle, - proposed Raven.

- Will not turn down. - happily said Mihailovich, sitting on the trunk of a fallen tree.

- I have to come every year on the Summer Solstice to Seydozero. I live here alone, about forty days. This is tradition for long time now. Some years, I think I will not go, but no, Seyda pulls.

Night was falling, in chatting with Mihailovich time passed quickly. He knew a lot about these places: the history, legends, personal observations. He literally lived the North, and it seemed that over the years their souls and destinies partially merged. Raven, even for a moment thought that part of the ancient consciousness of Kuyva, turned to flesh at that moment and it revealed its secrets and mysteries.- Tomorrow I leave - said Mihailovich caringly.- I have a tradition, before I leave the place to ride with boat at night on the river Elmorayok, from Seydozero to the mouth up, to say goodbye. I never took anyone with me, but today will make an exception. I invite you along, you'll see what the pedestrian tourists never see. Come in an hour to my camp, it is on spit of sand, near you, around the corner, can't miss it. Camp of Mihailovich was located

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in a very picturesque place, with a wide, sandy beach overlooking the entire lake and surrounding mountains. Cliff of Kuyva was clearly visible. Mihalilovich threw in the nose compartment of the boat a few reindeer skins. Reindeer skin - excellent thermal insulator, due to the structure of the hair it is possible to sleep on it in the winter in the snow, since ancient times the Sami acted like this, paving walls and floors of their tents with skin. Raven got into the boat, and they sailed away from the coast.

- This river is full of mysteries and puzzles, as well as the very Seydozero. The water in it is crystal clear and very cold - dead ... - Mihailovich was talking, leaning on the oars. - In Seydozero water becomes living flowing further to Seydyavryok river, locals refer to it as alive, the water in it is warm and affectionate, you will understand when boat will go through it. It is not that boat went from shore further than where legs can take you. From its source Elmorayok continues its route by Karnasurt mountain, not far from the pass through which you have to go to hit Seydozero. Very strong and beautiful place. Incidentally Karnasurt on Sami translates as Raven's Mountain (Karnas - raven urt - Mountain) and Elmorayok - river born on the breast of the Goddess of Birds.

Raven listened fascinated, as more of the northern magic was unfolding around him. With habitual movements of strong hands Mihailovich worked the oars, sending the boat against the current, as approached the rapids, Mikhalych stopped rowing, turned the boat, and they slowly floated downstream. - Lie down on the bow of the boat and look into the water, there, at the bottom of miracles - said Mihailovich. You have heard, I suppose, about the river Smorodine, the one that separates the world of the living from the world of the dead? Saami

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associated Seydozero with a paradise beyond the grave, Elmorayok - a road to there.

Over the river crept a soft mist, the river itself was very deep, but crystal clear, and snowy rocky bottom was clearly visible, like paved with huge stone slabs. In some places clearly discernible as it seemed to Raven, were the remains of stone buildings. Perhaps it was here that thousands of years ago was the legendary Hyperborea ...

The river was so clear that Raven soon stopped noticing it, feeling that they are floating through the sky on an ancient shamanic boat. And it was not directed by Mihailovich, but by a wise old shaman - Noida, revealing the secrets of these places to his successor. The experience was so strong that Raven had no words to express it. Northern tale, not good nor evil, for such human categories do not exist in the nature of these places. World of the Goddess, to which at such places only mighty Noida were able to gain access. According to legend, this place was one of several gates to the Otherworld, lost in the Arctic Circle in the remote areas of the Kola Peninsula.

After some time, they sailed down the river flow into Seydozero, there another surprise awaited Raven, lake, mountains, taiga - all gone, disappeared in a thick milky fog. They floated somewhere beyond the reality inside of the kingdom of Mara ...

Mihailovich gently held the boat along the sand spit, being careful not to drive it over the sandbank, and moored to the shore. It was difficult to Raven to determine how long it lasted an amazing journey on the river of the dead, a sense of the numinous for a long time did not leave him. Almost until dawn they drank tea at Mihailovich's, talking.

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In the morning Mihailovich cooked excellent fish soup from a Whitefish caught the day before in Seydozero. Raven learned that in ancient times the Sami were hiding paths to the sacred lake, and only one day a year they held a special ritual, disguising themselves in white robes, sewn just for that day, they fished on Seydozero and then boiled soup from this fish and they ate it on the shore. Before Raven went to his camp Mihailovich told him about a few more interesting places that awaited him on the road and were located away from popular tourist destinations. One of them was a "pillar" – Seid located above the trail on flat mountain ground, behind Seyduay creek. Unlike the majority of Seids composed by tourists, it was the ancient Sami Seid, a pillar gained its nickname because of the flat stones well-adjusted to each other stacked in the form of a rectangular column with a height of human growth. From this place view opens right on Kuyva. Mihailovich told about other mystical - Lake Rayyavr, or ancient Sami dark lake, the site is also very strong, and honored, visited by shamans in the past.

In the morning, before leaving the camp, Mihailovich offered to carry Raven and his backpack through the icy ford on the other side of the Seidozero, where they said goodbye. They did not exchange addresses and phone numbers, knowing that the most important thing they could have done for each other, they have already made. Their fates crossed in this place and again, each went his own way, leaving a trace in the soul of each other.

During the next day Raven went down to the Seyduay stream, then creek Chivruay and then in the evening, crossing ford of the river Seydyavryok flowing from Seydozero, he reached the ranger's cabin, standing in a picturesque location on a hill. Raven spent the night in one

of the tents rangers set for tourists. The next day, Raven reached the confluence of the stream flowing from the gorge between the mountains Kuamdespahk and Kuyvchorr in Seydozero. Along the creek, to the right there was a good trail leading to the pass. The vegetation was getting gradually thin, taiga replaced by bushes, and then turning into the stone deposits. Raven climbed the mountain in one breath, the rise was prolonged, but not difficult to climb, only a little at the end. The first thing that caught his eye was a small wooden shed, apparently put there by some geological reconnaissance groups. Weather quickly spoiled, beginning to rain. Raven decided to make a small halt, drink tea and wait out the bad weather. Cottage was neglected but it could protect him from the wind and rain. On the horizon appeared a small group of people, they were confident about the direction of the shelter, the first tourists whom Raven encountered in the area.

- All right, halt! - Raven heard commanding voice, apparently the head of the group. Violating privacy of Raven five people stumbled into the house with cheers. Noticing Raven, they greeted each other and began to lay out the backpacks, trying to stay comfortable in a confined space of the cover. Rain, meanwhile, has increased. On the threshold appeared the team leader, a bearded man of about forty-five, with weird appearance. At first glance, Raven guessed he was a seasoned traveler. Catching a glance at Raven, he shook hands and encircling group with a stern look he began handing out wards valuable instructions.

- Today, we have to get to the Motka river, that's why we are not staying long, quick lunch and continue to move at a pace. All begun to fuss, examining backpacks, bearded

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one sat down next to Raven. - Weather, during this season, just terrible, the fifth day of wandering around in the rain - he complained. - They say the whole neighborhood was flooded. And you, young man, where are you going? I see you travel alone.

- Yes, I do not like noisy company - said Raven - in silence and solitude it is easier to perceive all the beauty of these places. I'm going to the village of Lovozero, across the Svetloe lake and the river Sergevan ... And I had luck with weather I'm here for three days, the first time the rain is falling ... beautiful weather.

- Strange - With surprise bearded said. - Listen to you, like we walk through different tundra, and why did you decide to go through the Svetloe? No one walks that way for a long time, and there are no normal paths there. How are you going to move through Sergevan, swim or something, or a across ford you may know?

- No, I do not know I'm here for the first time, don't know if you have to swim to get across. I will solve problems as they come. I was told that there is a bridge.

- There was ... but it is dismantled for a long time, it was built for meteorologists, but the point was moved, so then the rescue bridge was dismantled, so they don't have to control it, or to bother with fixing it after the floods. You have to go with us to Motka river where you can take a boat and you will get to Lovozero without grieving.

- Thank you, but I'm better on my own, I'm not used to other way. - Tactfully said Raven.

- Well, look, do as you think. Risk is yours. By the way,

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there is still an impassable bog for a few kilometers, you were told about it?

- Yeah, I know, I will get over it somehow.

Bearded sympathetically shook his head and mumbled something about self-confident beginners who are so lost in these parts.

- Sergey, go to dinner – shouted out bearded. - Would you like me to pour you some coffee?

He turned to the group no longer talking to Raven, apparently deciding that he was a little crazy. After dinner the tourists were gone, wishing Raven a good luck. Rain left with their take off, as if chasing unwanted troublemakers. Raven smiled, seeing them leaving, followed by a cloud, and went on his way. Ahead he saw only sky, lit by the setting sun.

According to the map, the next point of his route was stone Sanctuary, located on the mountain Kuyvchorr, from the geologists house to the left. Instructor marked place on Raven's map, recommending him to stay there over night. On the flat rocky plateau structure of the stones, it turned out, was not easy to be found, he wondered around a little before it appeared on the horizon protruding stones that are too orderly combined for natural mound. Coming closer, Raven realized that he was not mistaken. The sanctuary was a circle of stones piled with internal beams, based on the center where, on a small hill, white crystal was set, with protruding ingrowths of transparent quartz. Outside the circle, on the four sides of the world, there were large flat stones. One of them was decorated with antlers of reindeer, and on it Kuyva was painted. The other

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was depicting swastika-like symbol that Raven had seen earlier on the shoulder of the instructor. The symbol was very interesting, it consisted of two swastikas inscribed into each other. Outside swastika looked like galaxy, its rays emanating from the center have been directed to the right side, and stylized as braids. Inside swastika, not so obvious, was inscribed in a circle, and formed the outer beams, its rays have the opposite direction. Raven read about something similar in ancient cosmology. Cosmic structure in developing - from undeveloped energy to the cause of the Cosmos ...

Raven put a tent not far from the sanctuary, securing its foundation stones and pulled over a storm stretching in case of strong winds. Tonight was surprisingly calm and windless, but the weather in this area, famous for its unpredictability, could suddenly change, and for this it was necessary to be prepared.

When finished with the installation of the tent, he closely examined the sanctuary. It was about midnight, but only light twilight and shining moon, slowly ascending through the sky were sign this. Raven looked around, as far as the eye could see, he saw a stone desert and the endless sky. For a moment he even thought that he was not on Earth. Many kilometers around there was not a single living soul, only the moon and rocks silently looked at the lone traveler, an infrequent visitor to these harsh lands.

Raven came to the central stone shrine, touching it, he closed his eyes and whispered - Mara.

Under fingertips he felt a slight vibration. - Mara - Raven

repeated, causing the image of his loved one to emerge from the depths of his soul.

He felt dizzy, and dark whirlpool began to spin in the head by absorbing consciousness. Vibration amplified. - Mara ... Maaraaa .. - Louder and more confidently repeated Raven, a name in a singsong voice vibrating to the beat of the rock. Raven opened his eyes pulsating glow was coming from the crystal. He walked a few steps, still projecting vibrations on the crystal. He felt like his whole body vibrates, it resonates with the stone. Raven saw the glow coming not only from the central stone, four outer stones also emitted light. He looked at the sky and the awe that gripped him, forced him to shut up. Raven did not understand whether all happened in reality or it was just a hallucination. The sky above his head, literally opened up. Huge Kosmion, so Raven called this symbol was cleaving the sky with its rays-scythes, exposing the black fabric of space. Raven saw the energy flow of incredible force attacked the Earth from opened womb of Cosmos directly to the stone circle, the center of which was passing through it into the ground, to the very heart of the planet merging with its energy field. A few minutes Raven managed to keep the vision, but the reality was gradually returning, and only a faint glow around the crystal talked about what had happened, and it soon subsided. A light breeze, touching Raven's face, returned him to the ordinary world. Startled, for some time he stood still, thinking about what happened. Back in the tent, he found that he lost several hours which he couldn't explain, Raven was sure that was not more than half an hour. In the morning Raven promptly collected the backpack and walked off. His aim was to continue further to the lake Svetloe, Sami called it Palgov, by name of a small but very delicious fish from the salmon family, the source of which was this lake for a long

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time. On a rock near the lake was another ancient Seid. Raven, still being under the influence of ritual, slowly descended down the spur of Kuvtordanyun, went over the ford on marked place, crossing River Svetlaya and surpassing the lake on the right bank, he came to the hunting lodge marked on the map, located close to the end of the lake up the mountain Vavnbed. Not knowing his whereabouts, it was not easy to find the house, the path leading to it was barely noticeable, but luckily, it was the only path leading to the mountain. The hut was small, inside was nothing superfluous: wood flooring with mattresses and blankets, stove, table, kitchen utensils, firewood - all that is needed for the life of a hunter and fisherman. Raven, after he looked around, left the backpack in the house and surpassing the lake, began his ascent of Mount Kemespahchorr, toward the ancient Seid, which was visible from any point of the lake. Vast fields of blueberries stretched along the road, on which were clearly visible traces of the bear. Raven knew that bears at that time fed around on the plentiful berries and mushrooms, and they didn't care about the man as a source of food. Yet, he knew he should not be relaxed, wildlife does not forgive. Next, he went through taiga thickets, he came across a lot of tracks of deer and wolverines, apparently bearded was right, in long time no human visited this place.

While climbing to the top Raven ran into a stone ridge, shape resembled a huge prehistoric lizard, as if he guarded the passage to the abode of spirits. After two hundred meters Raven stood on a large plateau, overgrown with moss, so smooth that you can play football on it. After going through it about one hundred meters more, Raven found himself on the platform, leading to Seid. It stood at

the edge of the mountains, followed by a steep wall breaking in slope down to the lake.

As he took the first step, Raven felt the energy manifested in the ritual of the sanctuary, again filling him entirely, plunging him into timelessness. Raven moved to Seid and feeling himself being at the same time, one of the ancient shamans - Noida, going to offer the sacrifice, going to engage in dialogue with the spirits, and being a one true adept of yet unknown to him the cult of the Goddess Mara. The three merged into one, and one was three. This experience was so overwhelming and numinous that Raven could not realize how long he was walking to the Seid. He realized something ancient and unchanging in the center of his being, that existed for always, and after his physical death it will also continue to exist. Changing only the shape and the shell, the essence which remained the same - the ancient, incomprehensible by the human mind consciousness fills these mountains, rivers, lakes and the sky above it. In this state of awareness, he walked over to Seid. It was taller than a man and with sharpened spire pierced the heavens. Despite strong winds, often raging in these parts for centuries Seid stood steadily on top of a cliff. Not far from it one could see the remains of the old antlers left there by shamans. Down there one could see lake Svetloe, on the banks of which in ancient times was located Sami settlement. They lived in symbiosis with the lake you fed them with fish, all of this was clearly seen by Raven's eyes of shaman. He clearly felt that connection. The consciousness of people living in the settlement, was quite different from the egocentric and materialistic consciousness of modern man. People of the past, did not separate themselves from each other, from these mountains, rivers and lakes. The nature of these places was severe tempering the character, but it also fed them fish

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and berries, forest game, and they responded with gratitude to her. This Seid was the place where they regularly offered a tribute and gratitude to the spirits of the ancestors. Raven saw how with time spiritless technocratic civilization gradually eclipsed clean look of living here. People have gone from these places to the village of Lovozero, which was lower on level of tundra. Gradually shamans gone, people have lost touch with nature. Raven looked over the cliff at the far village with eyes of shaman, of Raven and of the adept of a yet unborn cult. This cult was revealing itself more and more like an unknown flower in his mind. And when Raven came down from the mountain to the lake, there was finally a mosaic, there was no doubt any more, and he knew what he was to devote himself to returning from this Northern pilgrimage. The strength of these harsh places lit up his soul, and he saw glimpses of his own destiny. Expand and implement it - that was his goal.

VII

Night, forest, the full moon. He was running with full force, and only the moonlight illuminated his path. His task was to run ten kilometers in not more than fifty minutes, he had no clock, and only a few months of training allowed him to intuitively calculate the distance, and not to burn in the first few kilometers. Today, exactly six months after he joined Raven's group - was the day of his initiation. He trained hard both body and spirit, and now he had to prove that he was worthy to be one of them. There was something mystical in running through the woods, in the light of the full moon, he felt like a werewolf chasing a prey, and it filled him with enthusiasm and energy. But to him the final goal of this night cross-country, was a vast meadow with a circle of nine torches, which stood outside the circle of his friends. Raven nodded, and he realized that he kept within the specified time. Now he had to get in a circle and take the fight. Three sparring for three minutes continuously, with three different sparring partners - hand to hand, with a minimum of restrictions, and a knife fight, and fight with sticks. Before entering the circle, it was necessary to show the level of physical fitness, by having five laps of Cooper Test. The exercises are done in a full range of motion, ten push-ups, ten times pulling legs in abutment-sitting, and return to the lying position, ten times the "Book" activity, simultaneous lifting of the entire body and legs, ten jumping from a full squat, or ten of jumping-jack, five on each leg, knee touching the floor. Four exercises ten times, one round - cycling of all five laps must be performed in a maximum of five minutes. Qualifying standard, at Raven's signal he entered the circle. He defended with dignity the first three minutes, the knife sparring proceeds more rapidly, but the body was too tired, so under the given

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circumstances a knife fight was not as easy as a fist fight, round with sticks was the most difficult. The body was tired, but errors were fraught with hematomas and cuts, at blows with a stick he was sensitive, even in training wearing protection, and at the exam he was not spared. But the signal sounded the end of the fight, he stepped out of the circle, from physical fatigue and psyche overclocked by the sparring limit, his mind was somewhere abroad a reality.

Raven approached him.

- You withstood all tests with dignity, now you're one of us, congratulations!

Then his new brothers approached him and congratulated him. Each of them, at the time, passed the exam, and now they all understood his feelings. Raven looked at the newcomer, he saw how truly he was full of emotions of joy and pride, as the goal to which he aspired, was finally reached, but it was only the beginning of his Path. Further he would have a practice in the real world, not just the fight in training. Knife will not be wooden. Then the course of fire training, tactics and mental preparation. He will learn to think logically, to calculate the consequences of his actions a few steps ahead. Mastering the art of remaining inconspicuous and working both alone and in a group. To survive in different conditions ... Then, perhaps, he will be one of those who will go and make their own cell and give them the skills and knowledge, or he may follow the way of the lone predator Each has their own destiny. Outwardly, they were no different from the usual NS people, but in the soul of every one of them was a priest of the Goddess Mara. This sinister and dark part of their identity was not known to outsiders, but in days like this

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one, they tore off their masks, coming together for the seasonal and the NS holidays on which they are organized by torchlight of ceremonial battles for the glory of the Goddess, or to witness the exam as the next novice begins his Path.

There comes a time of Harvest, every day more and more Mara takes on flesh in this world. Thin invisible threads gradually spread over the Earth. Imperceptibly they fulfilled their destiny inextricably linked with the fate of their people and their land, and they administer the will of the Goddess, they who died during their lifetime, to recover the lost cosmic balance.

He looked at his brothers, they looked at him ... Raven realized that at that moment Mara was looking in her own eyes...

TBS, 124yf

KISS OF MARENA
APPENDIX, CHAPTER VI



MINE "KARNASURT"



ELMORAYOK PASS, PATH TO SEYDOZERO

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DANCING KUYVA

KISS OF MARENA



ANGRY KUYVA

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LAKE SEYDOZERO



RIVER ELMORAYOK

KISS OF MARENA



SEID "PILLAR" SEYDOZERO

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LAKE RAYYAVR



HUNTSMAN CABIN

KISS OF MARENA



TENTS NEAR HUNTSMAN CABIN



GEOLOGISTS CABIN

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SANCTUARY



KISS OF MARENA



LAKE SVETLOE



STONE GUARDIAN

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SEID ON SVETLOE